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# ENGLISH STYLE.

BY JOSEPH S. AUERBACH.

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“ Well do they play the careful critic’s part,  
Instructing doubly by their matchless art;  
Rules for good verse they first with pains indite,  
Then show us what are bad, by what they write.”

It is idle to ignore the deep, far-reaching significance of the fact that to-day many even well-educated persons indicate by their speech and writing an increasing indifference to anything approaching a due regard for English style. Such indifference is by no means a trivial or negligible matter, since, as a rule, a feeble, faulty style is associated not only with platitude, but frequently with intellectual error, as well as with a disregard, if not contempt, for true culture. As Mr. Benson says:

“ Very few people are on the lookout for style nowadays. The ordinary reader is quite indifferent to it, and the ordinary critic is quite unaware what it is. . . . The mistake is to think that there is much intellectual or artistic feeling abroad. . . . Indeed, the appreciation of intellectual and artistic excellence has distinctly decreased in the last fifty years; and probably the reason why there is a lack of great writers is that we do not at the present time want them. We want a sparkling, heady beverage; not an old, fragrant, mellow vintage. It is an age of cigarettes, champagne, golf, motors,—brisk, active, lively, brief things; not an age of reflection or repose.”

Matthew Arnold says, in speaking of our intolerance of any supervisory body like the French Academy:

“ We like to be suffered to lie comfortably in the old straw of our habits, particularly of intellectual habits, even though the straw may not be very clean and fine.”

If we are mindful of our duty and even of our interest, we must not be content until we have done what lies in our power to correct

such deplorable conditions. Especially in America are we charged with this responsibility.

We have many magazines which provide entertainment along with their pages of advertisements of wares and nostrums; and we give inadequate support to only one or two publications of a high order of literary excellence; and articles of distinct merit even in these are not by any means the rule. We can measure the extent of such a loss when we consider that volumes and volumes on our library shelves, constituting a priceless part of our literature, represent merely contributions to the magazines of the authors' day now bound together as books. It is a long catalogue of splendid names, among which are to be numbered those of Carlyle, Macaulay, Addison, Arnold, Stevens and Johnson. "There were giants in the earth in those days."

It is at best doubtful whether our universities are doing their share of the work of correction. From the curriculums of some of them the classics, with all their qualifications for intellectual training and for the inculcation of an understanding and love of what is true style, have been largely omitted. Our universities are teaching many things; just how much of what they are teaching can be fairly regarded as a substitute, if there be any substitute, for that which has been thus omitted is quite another question.

Apparently, a special department for the teaching of English will not suffice. President Thwing of the Western Reserve University says, in a late number of *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*:

"Oxford has no special chair devoted to the training of students in the art of English composition. For thirty years and more, the American College has been emphasizing this department and form of instruction. The Oxford system presupposes that the writing of English is an art and a science in which it is a duty of every instructor to give tuition. The department is not a department. It does not represent segregations. It must be confessed that the results of the two systems seem to favor the Oxford interpretation and method. One comprehensive deficiency of the American system is found in the lack of a sense of style which most of the writing done by American students shows."

So keen an observer as Mr. Howells, in one of his recent books, contrasts the "slovenliness" of speech of the best type of the American undergraduate with "the beauty of utterance" of the Oxford student.

While it is true that to our over-devotion to the exacting de-

mands of trade and commerce, and to neglect in the home circle and in the preparatory school, is to be traced much of our indifference to English style, and therefore to culture; yet, in the opinion of those qualified to speak authoritatively on the subject, some of our great educational institutions are blameworthy and must accept their share of the responsibility.

It is not presumptuous, therefore, for one with only such information on the subject as is possessed by persons of ordinary education, to call attention to existing methods which neither meet with the approval of the observant scholar nor accomplish the desired results.

Moreover, not only does the Oxford student speak the English language better than the American student, but the graduate of our best universities not a score of years ago spoke it with a grace and precision compared with which the conversation of many a graduate of the present day is a close approach to a kind of jargon. There has been of late years a distinct decadence in literary expression. With our undue striving after "practical" things and results, we have established in some of our universities the form of a drill or routine instruction for the writing of correct English, but apparently we are content with the form. It would seem, at best, doubtful whether appropriate prominence has been given to the development of a love for English literature.

It is not meant by this statement to suggest that text-books on rhetoric can be dispensed with. Quite the contrary. They are essential to the mastery of the art of writing, though the knowledge acquired from a study of them should not be displayed offensively, any more than need the decalogue be referred to with ostentation by the man of honor as his guide to right conduct.

The text-books, however, should be those which, both by precept and example, teach the principles of English composition, and not merely a series of ungraceful, though correct, directions strung together as rigid rules. They must be books which are the product of the scholar's effort, and which will persuade the student to turn to the open page of literature, whence will come the incentive and inspiration to grace and vigor of expression. The standard works on rhetoric accomplish this result and are not lightly to be cast aside; if any new treatise is to be written, it must supplement these works, and not attempt to supplant them.

The whole subject receives a fresh interest by reason of the issue from the publication office of Harvard University of a pamphlet containing among other things illustrations of errors in the writing of English by students applying for admission to Harvard College. Many of the sentences, it is true, are sorry exhibitions of a total lack of a knowledge of English style on the part of the ordinary American student, though some of them, it may be suggested, do not deserve the censure they receive. But, while it is made abundantly clear that there are students incapable of writing anything approaching graceful, forceful English, a cursory examination of the pamphlet discloses the fact that more than one sentence of its authors cannot be said to be above reproach.

The chief significance of the pamphlet, however, lies in the fact that it goes out of its way to commend a work on "English Composition," by the Professor of English Literature in Harvard University, considered sufficiently meritorious to justify its recent republication by the Messrs. Charles Scribners' Sons of New York City, and its use as a text-book for Harvard students.

It is of deep import, not only to the instructor and the student, but also to the general reader, to know whether this book, by the Professor of English Literature in our representative university—who is himself sufficiently prominent to have been selected to deliver a course of lectures on literary subjects at Oxford and Paris—is entitled to be regarded as an authority on English composition. If it ought not to be so regarded, then we should endeavor to arrive at a correct estimate of the merits of such a book, uninfluenced in our judgment by its authorship, its commendation, or the use to which it is devoted.

For, as has been said by Mr. Moon in his masterpiece of criticism, "The Dean's English":

"By influential example it is that languages are moulded into whatever form they take; therefore, according as example is for good or for evil, so will a language gain in strength, sweetness, precision and elegance, or will become weak, harsh, unmeaning and barbarous."

And Macaulay says, in defence of his rather merciless review of Robert Montgomery's poems, that

"The opinion of the great body of the reading public is very materially influenced even by the unsupported assertions of those who assume the right to criticise."

It would be reasonable to expect that, under the conditions

stated, this work on "English Composition" would be a worthy publication, and compare favorably with the standard books on rhetoric, and even with treatises on style by such distinguished men of letters as Arnold and Pater and Hazlitt and De Quincey. Yet it can be confidently asserted that this reasonable expectation is not realized; that neither for its precept nor for its example is the book justly entitled to be commended; and that in it are found emphasized many objectionable methods of imparting instruction in English writing.

Some new definitions are attempted, but these are neither particularly happy nor comprehensive. Along with some rather solemn insistence upon principles the correctness of which is generally conceded, we find a certain finality in statements concerning things about which men have agreed there may be a justifiable difference of opinion, while many obvious facts are described in detail as if the author were announcing to the world some great intellectual discovery. We find crudities, inaccuracies, mistakes of grammar and exhibitions of at least questionable scholarship. There are also some enigmatical observations as to the art of writing; but, as Mr. John Morley has said, "a platitude is not turned into a profundity by being dressed up as a conundrum."

There is little in the book indicating an abounding charity, or even a fair consideration, for the views of others; men and things unwelcome to the author are treated with scant courtesy.

The author says that particularly journalists, along "with most of us, generally speak or write hastily, without leisure to consider details of style." There are, however, in the city of New York several newspapers in which no editorial so loosely and so inartistically put together as the greater part of this book, is ever printed. Legal language is referred to as associated with "bewildering, slovenly masses of words." Yet, the brief of many a trained advocate at the Bar of New York is written with more idiomatic, graceful, forceful English than is characteristic of this book.

Wendell Phillips, whose name is found high on the roll of great orators, is called "the cleverest of our oratorical tricksters." Of Emerson the author says, "Emerson's indubitable obscurity to ordinary readers I take to be a matter of actual thought." The sentence which the author quotes in illustration of his assertion is the following, which he "fails to understand at all":

"The simplest person who in his integrity worships God becomes God; yet forever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable."

As we read on in "English Composition" we shall have cause to wonder what would have been the result if the author had undertaken to restate the great spiritual truth expressed by Emerson in such simple, impressive words.

There are long rambling references to things which are at least trivial. On pages 35, 36 and 37, in the discussion of the sentences "Nero killed Agrippina," and "*Nero interfecit Agrippinam*,"—with the commentary, among other things, that it is the convenient final "m" which "does Agrippina's business,"—as in the discussion on pages 107, 108 and 109 of the sentence, "I started up, and a scream was heard," with its variations "I started up and screamed" and "I started up with a scream," it is made clear *ad nauseam* that the most obvious conclusions are defensible.

Much of the treatment of the subject cannot be said to be on a very elevated plane. We are told about "our present business," "our next business," "the chief part of our business"; "the matter in hand," "the chief matter in hand" and "the real matter in hand." Things "at bottom" are of this or that character; the writer's art is a "trade with tricks"; we have "pieces of style" as well as "pieces of writing" and "pieces of literature"; "clauses are thrown into grammatical form"; words are "pitched upon," and ideas are referred to as "packed," not only within prose sentences, but into exquisite lines of verse.

Even in quotations by the author we find inaccuracy and looseness.

On page 295 we read: "No man is great to his body-servant, you remember." No one remembers this. What we do remember is that "No man is a hero to his valet," a fairly accurate translation of a French line.

In speaking of Emerson, the author says, on page 208: "Consistency, if I remember aright, he somewhere declares to be the chief vice of little minds." The author did not remember aright. What Emerson wrote was that "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

The following statement is fairly typical of some of the attempts to deal with the subject after a scholarly method (pages 56 and 58):

"Etymology, in short, is a most interesting study or pastime; and the history of this *potpourri* of an English of ours makes the fit words for simple ideas—ideas of fighting, for example, or of spontaneous aspiration—chiefly Saxon in their origin; but the same history makes the fit words for more contemplative ideas—ideas of literary criticism, for example, or of deliberate meditation—chiefly Latin. . . . Big words are apt to be Latin, and little to be Saxon; *acknowledge* and *damn* to the contrary notwithstanding."

To condemn any such statement we do not need to contrast it with the language of the scholar, as found in books like "Words and Their Ways in English Speech," by Professors Greenough and Kittredge of Harvard. In comparison with even the common knowledge possessed by all persons reasonably well informed as to the genesis of English speech, the statement quoted lacks seriousness.

Again, on pages 282 and 283, there is a discussion as to the choice of the word "Elegance" for the title of one of the chapters of the book. The use of this obvious word needed no defence, and as matter of fact the author admits he adopted the three divisions of his subject, "Clearness, Force and Elegance," from Professor Adams S. Hill's book. The author, however, insists on justifying his choice of the word by a reference to what is termed its derivation from "*ex*" and "*lego*," which he says "mean literally to pick out, to choose from among some great mass of things the one thing that shall best serve our purpose, etc." The author by such a method could have justified for the title of his chapter the use of "Election," which much more directly than "elegance" is derived from "*ex*" and "*lego*." The fact is that our word "elegance" is probably traceable directly or indirectly to the Latin "*elegans*," to which was already attached its figurative meaning before it was adopted into our language; and "*elegans*" was not derived from the verb "*lego*" of Latin literature, but from an obsolete verb of the first conjugation. The whole discussion absolutely and relatively is misleading.

Such resort to etymology is, as a rule, of little aid in determining the precise meaning which usage attaches to words. Mr. Marsh in his "Lectures on the English Language," and Mr. Greenough and Mr. Kittredge, in their book above referred to, have an emphatic condemnation of "such false linguistic doctrine."

On page 46 there is this sentence:

"And I know that there are few more unidiomatic absurdities than those of the gentlemen who insist on spelling Alfred Aelfred, and Virgil with an *e*, and otherwise on impairing that irrational, spontaneous variety which people who love English know to be one of its most subtle charms."

That such a peculiarity in spelling has anything to do with an idiomatic absurdity will be news to most persons; and, in the thoughts of some unamiable reader, the author's rather flippant assumption of superiority to the scholars who insist that "*Vergil*" is a correct spelling may well seem to border on a kind of arrogance.

The expression "*it is me*" is defended as idiomatic for the reason that "*it is I*" is conceived to be pedantic. The distinction in the use of the auxiliary verbs *shall* and *will* is by no means forcibly or fully stated.

While it is true that some accepted rules of writing are correctly set forth, they are found as well if not better expressed by other authors; and perhaps it may not be unfair to say, as to this part of the book, what Webster said of the Free-soil party:

"I have read their platform, and though I think there are some unsound places in it, I can stand upon it pretty well; but I see nothing in it both new and valuable: what is valuable is not new, and what is new is not valuable."

When, however, we consider the style of the book, it is exceptional to find sentences which are not censurable for their feeble or ungraceful structure; and the quotations which follow—reproduced as printed, except that words are italicized in order to emphasize errors—are selected from among similar sentences almost at random.

The methods which, after a reflection of ten years, the author adopts and recommends for intellectual production are, to say the least, novel; some persons might pronounce them not serious.

"On separate bits of paper—cards, if they be at hand—I write down the separate headings that occur to me, in what seems to me the natural order. Then, when my little pack of cards is complete—in other words, when I have a card for every heading which I think of—I study them and sort them almost as deliberately as I should sort a hand at whist; and it has very rarely been my experience to find that a shift of arrangement will not decidedly improve the original order. . . . A few minutes' shuffling of these little cards has often revealed to me more than I should have learned by hours of unaided pondering."

There are, however, other methods, for on page 211 we read:

"My method of clearing my ideas is by no means the only one. I have known people who could do it best by talking; by putting somebody in [*sic*] a comfortable chair and making him listen to their efforts to discover what they really think."

Certainly the listener undergoing such an ordeal is entitled to a comfortable chair; for the people intent on clarifying their ideas might all talk at once.

The author of this book has shown by some of his literary work that he is not without the ability to present a subject attractively. The most indifferent writing, however, seems to be good enough for this book.

On page 120 we have an example of what is considered good English:

"A sentence which on analysis proves *sensible* is generally good English. By the same token, a *paragraph sensibly* composed is beyond cavil a good paragraph."

To it, however, should be added this sentence from page 35:

"A style that sticks together is coherent; a style whose parts hang loose is not";

and also the following intellectual nugget from page 193:

"In the first place, any *piece* of style appeals to the *understanding*; we *understand* it, or we do not *understand* it, or we are doubtful whether we *understand* it or not; in other words, it has an intellectual quality."

Sentence after sentence will be found ending with "what not" and "and so on," long before the expression of the thought has approached completion. For instance, on page 112 we read:

"As I utter these words in combination, the pronoun calls up certain individualities of face and form and manner and dress, *and what not*."

On page 167 we read:

"There may be living occasional individuals who have resisted the impulse to skip the endless lucubrations of Dryasdust *and what not*; but I do not remember having met one."

On page 89 we read:

"I have said enough, I hope, to show that the *fundamental difference* between periodic sentences and loose is about the same as the *fundamental differences* we discussed between *different* kinds of words,—Latin and Saxon, big and little, *and so on*; it is a *difference* of effect."

On pages 76, 125, 128 and 190 we have more of these "*and so ons.*"

Clearly, the reader is entitled to know the author's meaning, and to insist that he be not foreclosed of information by these meaningless "what nots" and "and so ons." There is about as much propriety in this kind of writing as there was in the conduct of the country minister who, after reading in Genesis of the genealogy of the patriarchs, how Adam begat Seth and Seth begat sons and daughters, summed up the remainder of the chapter by the rather novel and yet comprehensive assertion: "And so they kept on begetting to the end of the chapter."

Here are illustrations of favorite but quite indefensible expressions distributed throughout the book:

"Are not short sentences preferable to long? What long sentences are, and short, I leave to your common sense; what anybody can perceive needs no definition" (page 89).

"From this, two or three conclusions follow, sometimes laid down as distinct rules. Obviously a short sentence is less apt to stray out of unity than a long; a periodic than a loose" (page 98).

"If our object be to ramble, then not to ramble were to blunder; but in general our object is to produce a definite effect and not a nebulous" (page 162).

"Perhaps the simplest way to show the superiority of carefully planned work to carelessly, is to compare," etc. (page 181).

Repetition of the same words is persisted in, as in one of the sentences just quoted, when its avoidance is required by euphony and the rules of graceful writing. We read:

"And the *more* you analyze your impressions of style the *more* you will find, unless your experience differs surprisingly from *most*, that," etc. (page 8).

"In a book on rhetoric I lately read is a long *quotation* from some respectable *man of letters* concerning what the career of a *man of letters* ought to be; and at the end of the *quotation* he who *quotes* writes thus" (page 205).

The following quotation is from the chapter on "Elegance":

"And whoever should say that passionate writing cannot have the trait before us now—the *quality* that pleases the taste—as well as the intellectual *quality* clearness, and the emotional *quality* force, would obviously say something that would make his *notion* of the *quality* very different from the *notion* I am trying to lay before you."

Perhaps a frivolous and provincial person might say by way of paradox, that this sentence lacks "quality."

On page 71, there is this sentence:

"It is not what it seemed at first,—simply to *pitch* upon a word by which good use has agreed with reasonable approximation to *name* the idea he wishes to *arouse*. *It is equally, if not more*, to make sure that the word he chooses shall not only *name* the idea distinctly enough to identify it, but also *name* it by a *name*—if such a *name* is to be found—which shall *arouse*," etc.

We can all recall from the great books of literature the impressive and often electric effect of judicious repetition, but it is of a different quality from that so lavishly displayed in "English Composition."

Throughout the book the relative pronoun "that" is over and over again used to excess where the employment of "which" is demanded by good usage or euphony. Evidently the author has determined to deny "The humble petition of WHO and WHICH" against being supplanted by the "jack sprat THAT," as playfully submitted by Steele in "The Spectator."

There are attempts like the following to contribute to the sum of our knowledge. On page 32 is this sentence:

"What distinguishes *written words* from *spoken*, literature from the colloquial language that precedes it, is that *written words* address themselves to the eye and *spoken words* to the ear. Though this fundamental physical fact has been neglected by the makers of text-books, I know *few* more important."

It may be said that the fact referred to has not been neglected by the makers of text-books, if by the "makers of text-books" we are warranted in guessing that the author meant to describe the writers of books on Rhetoric and Composition; and having in mind the well-known lines of *Ars Poetica* we may add that the oft-pointed-out distinction is as old as Horace and the hills.

On page 209 we have the following:

"To be clear in narrative, or in exposition, or in argument, or in any kind of discourse whatever, we must evidently *proceed* from what is known to what is unknown; and if at any point in this *process* we permit our style to become vague or ambiguous or obscure,—in other words, *so to express ourselves* either that our meaning may *rationaly* be mistaken or that we may *rationaly* be supposed to have no meaning at all,—we may resign ourselves," etc.

Aside from the characteristic faults of the author, it may be stated that the "so to express ourselves" is inadmissible. The context requires the expression "if we so express ourselves," etc.; or the "to" before "express" must be omitted.

There are many sentences exhibiting an ingenious variety of infelicities in the choice and use of words fatal to a correct and pleasing style; but lack of space forbids more than this passing reference to them.

Then, too, an indefensible order of words produces at times an effect almost grotesque.

On page 94 we read:

"Of course, these few examples indicate the development of style in a very rough way."

On page 23, the italics being the author's, we read:

"'I noticed a dirty *gamin*,' writes a student; and another, using a word now confined at Harvard College to street urchin, describes the same small boy as a *mucker*."

Perhaps one may suggest that the confinement had not been very rigorous; for clearly the word has broken jail and is enjoying its liberty in street talk and sometimes elsewhere.

On page 33 we are edified with this rather surprising statement:

"Or again, remark a fact that is becoming in my literary studies comically general: familiar quotations from celebrated books are almost always to be found at the beginning or the end. 'Music hath charms' are the opening words of Congreve's 'Mourning Bride.' Don Quixote fights with the windmill very early in the first volume; he dies with the remark that there are no birds in *last* year's nests near the end of the *last*."

The advice to the shoemaker to "stick to his last" does not work well when applied literally in authorship.

On page 183 we are regaled with this utterance:

"Perhaps the cleverest variation of all is that by which such treason to a friend as *makes* Proteus odious is *made*, simply by attributing it to Helena, a woman, a very venial matter."

Mr. Choate, with his inimitable humor, dismissed the claim of the equality of woman to man by the statement that woman at best was but a "side issue." It was reserved for the author of "English Composition," however, to assert that woman is "a very venial matter."

With the following sentences, which embody much that is typical of the author's style, together with what may not im-

properly be regarded as a fitting commentary on "English Composition," the limit of quotations for a magazine article will have been reached.

"All the carelessness of habitual speech and *writing* rarely suffices to make a *note* of *something* recent by any means as indistinct as a *note* of the same *thing* after an interval. While sometimes a mere *matter* of style, vagueness is oftener an actual *matter* of thought. In a *general* way, a *vague writer* does not know what he wants to say, and so *generally* says *something* that may mean a great many different *things*."

The author properly enough, as one will see who inspects the two books, has acknowledged his obligations to the text-book of Professor Hill, in which are printed side by side many examples of incorrect and correct sentences. To Professor Hill's work could be added no mean supplement devoted entirely to the reconstruction of faulty sentences from "English Composition." For such use the author may properly claim he has written an acceptable text-book entitled to an extended circulation;

*Ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum  
Reddere quae ferrum valet exors ipsa secandi.*

It can be said without exaggeration that the foregoing sentences are fairly illustrative of the unfortunate methods employed in this book. In the true sense it cannot be said to have any style at all. Errors in scores of its sentences are apparent even to the most inexperienced writer; and it is the exception to find thoughts expressed with either grace or vigor. Even in the quality of clearness, the book is full of transgressions, while to the precision and niceties and beauty of the English language it seems quite oblivious. Yet at Harvard University, which prides itself upon its method of instruction in the study of our language, "English Composition" is commended by its faculty and used as a text-book. In one of our great institutions of learning, therefore, the judgment of Addison that no critical writer "has ever pleased or been looked upon as authentic who did not show by his practice that he was master of the theory" seems obsolete. And the pity of it all is the author has made it clear by his other publications that he could have written a worthy book on English composition.

*Sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*

Assuredly the time has come for the educated people of the community to express in no uncertain voice their disapproval of

such conditions. In the possession of what Emerson terms our great metropolitan English speech and of our English literature, we are the trustees of a splendid and priceless treasure. It is our duty and our privilege to transmit it at least undisfigured and unimpaired to succeeding generations; while the few who are fitted for the task are bound to do what lies in their power to increase that possession in volume and in charm.

It is to be feared, however, that we are unable to render a very creditable account of our stewardship, and that our indifference to literary expression and to culture is but a symptom of much that is of evil import.

As we have been directing our restless energy towards commercial supremacy, made possible by laws which have perhaps been too prodigal in their promotion and protection of industry, we have, in order to insure our success, cast out of our life much of its composure and its true rewards; we have failed often to discern the relative importance of things, or to appraise them at their real value; we have even fallen short of many duties we owe to our neighbor and the State. As we have grown fat with material prosperity, we have starved ourselves spiritually. It will profit us much to exchange some of our "practical" aims and results for a few old-fashioned standards of ideals and of conduct.

Then, too, if it be not yet taught from the pulpit, it is beginning to be recognized that in the divine order of the world there never has been and never will be a place for the intervention of miracle or accident, and it is reasonably certain that new beliefs and readjustments will enter into our religious faith. We must seek out some compensation for the consequent loss.

More and more, as these thoughts are brought home to us, the great books of literature, of which the Bible is supreme,—whether we regard their never-failing springs of intellectual joy, their lofty aspirations after truth and beauty, their deep insight into the perplexing problems of the world or their conception of righteousness—should come to occupy a revered place and assert a controlling influence in the lives of men.

Nor ought we to consider our higher education complete until a just appreciation of what is best in the classic authors has become part of it. As Mr. Woodrow Wilson said, in his inaugural address as President of Princeton University:

"The classical literatures give us, in tones and with an authentic accent we can nowhere else hear, the thoughts of an age we cannot visit. They contain airs of a time not our own, unlike our own, and yet its foster parent. To these things was the modern thinking world first bred. In them speaks a time naïve, pagan, an early morning day when men looked upon the earth while it was fresh, untrodden by crowding thought, an age when the mind moved as it were without prepossessions and with an unsophisticated, childlike curiosity, a season apart during which those seats upon the Mediterranean seem the first seats of thoughtful men. We shall not anywhere else get a substitute for it. The modern mind has been built upon that culture and there is no authentic equivalent."

We must promote these tendencies unless we are prepared to witness consequences that are for the benefit neither of ourselves nor of the Republic; and to promote them we must be intolerant of such books as "English Composition," which with their confusion of expression persuade no one to a love and a reverence for letters.

For that which distinguishes great authors above their contemporaries is the style of their work. That which gives even to Shakespeare his surpassing excellence is not only that intellectually he was more perfectly equipped than all the goodly company of which he was a part, but also that he wrote with a nobility and splendor of expression which made him "not of an age, but for all time."

Great thoughts and great emotions find their true interpretation and are made manifest in the infinite variety of the style of illustrious, creative minds, as the several strings of a musical instrument are waked to harmony by the touch of genius. There is the *Leit-Motif* in letters as there is in music. Style is not something separate and apart from literature, any more than, in the conception of the devout worshipper, is God Himself a being outside of and aloof from the throbbing life of His universe. Style is not a mere ornamentation and adornment of the written word, but its very soul; and it will find eloquent and persuasive utterance when, as though within a great temple, men shall have consecrated themselves anew to the spirit of culture.

JOSEPH S. AUERBACH.